

percent bracket permanent, they pay \$1,000 next year. We're running up taxes on this family, and it affects their ability to make decisions. It affects their future. It's just—it doesn't make any sense for Congress not to make the tax relief permanent. And the best way that I can possibly tell the story—they're used to me—is all they've got to do is listen to what tax relief meant for people in their lives and what tax increases would do. And so I call upon Congress to listen to the voices of the people out here struggling to get ahead in America, people who are making good decisions, people who are doing their duty as responsible citizens to love their children

with all their heart, people who are putting food on the table.

I want to repeat to you what I said before. This country has overcome a lot, and we're moving forward with optimism and confidence. You know why? Because we've got great people. And I'm proud to be the leader of such a strong nation.

Thank you all for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:52 a.m. at ISCO Industries. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, husband of Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao; Gov. Ernie Fletcher and Lt. Gov. Steve Pence of Kentucky; and Mayor Jerry E. Abramson of Louisville, KY.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Luncheon in Louisville *February 26, 2004*

Thank you all for coming. Thanks for your support. Thanks for your friendship. Thanks for your warm welcome. I'm proud to be back here in the great Commonwealth of Kentucky. I'm pleased to be with so many friends.

I appreciate my friend Darrell Waltrip being here. I was at NASCAR the other day. Man, I can see why he likes that so much. *[Laughter]* It's an amazing environment. He has a lot to be proud of. He had a fabulous career. I know one of his proudest moments came when his little brother won the big race in Florida. I went through the same experience. *[Laughter]*

We're ready to go here in Kentucky. We've got a great organization. I want to thank the people who are going to man the phones and put up the signs and get the people to the polls. The Vice President and I appreciate all you did for us last time. We appreciate all you're going to do for us this time. We intend to win the State of Kentucky.

Vice President Cheney is a great Vice President. He's done a heck of a good job for our country. Our country has had no finer Vice President, although Mother may have a second opinion. No, I'm proud to have him by my side, proud to be campaigning with him.

I'm also proud of the job Laura is doing. She's a fabulous First Lady for this country. She sends her best, her best wishes and her love to our friends here in Kentucky.

I want to thank Cathy Bailey for taking on a tough job and doing such a good job.

I want to thank Elaine Chao, who is with us today, a member of my Cabinet. I think when people start to analyze an administration's effectiveness, they need to look at the people in the Cabinet. When people surround themselves with excellence—they should surround themselves with excellence, and I have. I've attracted a really good team of people from all walks of life to come to the Nation's Capital and to

serve something greater than their self-interest: their country. And Elaine is part of the fabulous Cabinet I put together, and I want to thank you for being here, Elaine. And I understand why your husband is not here—he's voting. But Mitch has done a really good job for the people of Kentucky, and I'm proud to call him friend.

You need to send Jim Bunning back to Washington, DC, as well. I flew down with Anne Northup today on the plane. We had a great visit about Kentucky and the issues down here. She's a really competent, good person. I know Woody is with us; Anne had to go back and cast an important vote. I gave her permission to do so. *[Laughter]* But she really is a fine, fine Representative of the people of Louisville, Kentucky. You need to send her back too.

And I appreciate my friend the Governor being here. He's got the—I used to say the Governor was the best job in America. I'm not so sure, because you don't have much foreign policy. *[Laughter]* But it's important to have somebody who is willing to make decisions, and Ernie is that kind of person. He'll do a fine job as a Governor of this State, and I'm proud—proud, Ernie, that you ran. I appreciate you coming.

And I'm glad Steve Pence is with us, the Lieutenant Governor. And Secretary of State Trey Grayson is here as well. Senate President David Williams—he and I were just laughing about the time we campaigned in southern Kentucky in a mobile home, eating Kentucky barbecue. *[Laughter]* Gosh, I hope I get some on the plane going back. But good to see David. And Dick Roeding is with us as well. I appreciate the local and State officials who have come today.

I want to thank Mike Duncan and Ellen Williams, great friends of mine who are helping steer this party to victory. I want to thank my friend Mercer Reynolds, who is the national finance chairman—he's from Cincinnati, Ohio—who has taken time out of his busy life to help make sure that we're ready to go, that when the bell rings,

this campaign is fully funded and ready to take our message across the country.

You know, we meet here during the Presidential primary season. We're witnessing a clear trend. It looks like we have a winner in the Republican primaries. *[Laughter]* The other party's nomination battle is still playing out. They're an interesting group with a lot of strong differences of opinion. They're for tax cuts and against them, for NAFTA and against NAFTA, for the PATRIOT Act, against the PATRIOT Act, in favor of liberating Iraq and opposed to it. And that's just one Senator from Massachusetts.

They haven't—they're not finished selecting their nominee. Yet this much is certain: Come November, the voters are going to have a very clear choice. It's a choice between keeping the tax relief that is moving the economy forward or putting the burden of higher taxes back on the American people. It is a choice between an America that leads the world with strength and confidence or an America that is uncertain in the face of danger. I look forward to setting these alternatives squarely before the American people. I look forward to the campaign.

We have a record of historic achievement. And most importantly, we have a positive vision for the years ahead, for winning the war against terror, for extending peace and freedom throughout our world, and for creating jobs and opportunity here at home. We will leave no doubt where we stand, and we will win on the 2d of November.

The last 3 years have brought serious challenges, and we have given serious answers. We came to office with an economy heading into recession. We delivered historic tax relief, and now our economy is the fastest growing of any major industrialized nation. We had to confront corporate crimes that cost people their jobs and their savings, so we passed strong corporate reforms and we made it abundantly clear we

will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning, so we have pursued the terrorist enemy across the world and have captured or killed many key leaders of the Al Qaida network. And the rest of them will learn there is no cave or hole deep enough to hide from American justice.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, so we ended two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We freed more than 50 million people in those two countries. Once again, America is proud to lead the armies of liberation.

When Dick Cheney and I came to Washington, we found a military that was underfunded and underappreciated, so we gave our military the resources and respect they deserve. And today, no one in the world can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

When we came to office, people had gotten used to gridlock and old problems were used to score points. Old problems were politicized and debated and just—then just passed on from year to year. But we didn't come to Washington to do things the Washington way. We came to get some things done. We passed major reforms to raise standards in public schools all across America. We passed reforms in Medicare to get prescription drugs and choice to senior citizens. We chose to lead, and we have delivered results for the American people.

Here's what I believe: It is the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. A President needs to step up, make the hard decisions, and keep his commitments. And that is how I will continue to lead our country.

Great events will turn on this election. The man who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. The security

and prosperity of America are at stake. Our opponents have not offered much in the way of strategies to win the war or policies to expand the economy. So far, all we hear is a lot of old bitterness and partisan anger. Anger is not an agenda for the future of America. We will take on the big issues with optimism and resolve and determination. We stand ready to lead our country for the next 4 years.

A big issue for every family in America is the Federal tax burden. With the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President, we have left more money in the hands of those who earned it. By spending and investing, people have helped to move this economy forward. More people are finding work. The American people have used their money far better than the Government would have.

Our opponents have their own plan for the tax cuts. They plan to take them away. They will use that money to expand the Federal Government. I have a better idea. To keep the economy growing, we must have fiscal discipline in Washington, DC. To keep the economy growing, the tax cuts must be permanent.

We must do more. We need to protect small-business owners and employees from frivolous lawsuits and needless regulation. We need to control the costs of health care by passing medical liability reform. We need to pass sound energy legislation to modernize our electricity system and to make America less dependent on foreign sources of energy. Our opponents talk about job creation, but they're against every one of these job-creating measures. Empty talk about jobs won't get anybody hired. The way to create jobs is through our pro-growth, pro-entrepreneurial economic agenda.

This economy of ours is going through a time of challenge and change, and we're helping people to gain the skills and security to make a good living and to look forward to a good retirement. All skills start

with education. That's why I was so insistent that Congress pass the No Child Left Behind Act. It is a good law, a sound piece of legislation, historic reform that brings high standards and accountability to every classroom in America.

There's more to do. We have a plan to help high school students who fall behind in reading and math. We have plans to make sure our community colleges train workers for the industries that are creating the most new jobs. Education is the gateway to a hopeful future, and that gate must be open to all Americans.

This administration is also working toward an ownership society in which more people own their own homes to build their own savings. We want more people owning their own small businesses. We want people owning and managing their health care plans. We want younger workers to own and manage their retirement under Social Security. When people have solid assets, they gain independence and security and dignity and more control over their future. I believe so strongly in private property, I want every American to own some.

On issue after issue, the American people have a clear choice. Our opponents are against personal retirement accounts. They're against putting patients in charge of Medicare. They're against tax relief. They seem to be against every idea that gives Americans more authority and more choices and more control over our own lives. It's the same old Washington mindset. They'll give the orders, and you will pay the bills. I've got news for them. America has gone beyond that way of thinking, and we're not going back. Inherent in all our policies is this theme, this belief: We trust the people, not Washington politicians, to make the best decisions for their own money, their own health, their own retirement, and their own lives.

Our future also depends on America's leadership in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong, but we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is

wounded but not broken. Terrorists are testing our will in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness and uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

No friend or enemy today doubts the word of the United States. This Nation is strong. We are steadfast. We are confident in the cause of freedom. America and our allies gave an ultimatum to the terror regime in Afghanistan. The Taliban chose defiance. The Taliban are no longer in power. America and our allies gave an ultimatum to the terror regime in Iraq. The dictator chose defiance. The dictator now sits in a prison cell.

September the 11th, 2001, taught a lesson I have not forgotten. America must confront threats before they fully materialize. In Iraq, my administration looked at the intelligence, and we saw a danger. Members of Congress looked at the intelligence, and they saw danger. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence; it saw a danger. The previous administration and Congress looked at the intelligence and made regime change in Iraq the policy of our country.

In 2002, the United Nations Security Council yet again demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. And as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein refused to comply. So we had a choice to make, either to take the word of a madman or take action to defend America and the world. Faced with that choice, I will defend America every time.

Others would have chosen differently. They now agree that the world is better off with Saddam removed from power. They just didn't support removing him from power. *[Laughter]* Maybe they were hoping he would lose the next Iraqi election. *[Laughter]*

We showed the dictator and the watching world that America means what it says. Because our coalition acted, Saddam's torture

chambers are closed. Because we acted, Iraq's weapons programs are ended forever. Because we acted, nations like Libya have gotten the message and renounced their own weapons programs. Because we acted, an example of democracy is rising at the very heart of the Middle East. Because we acted, the world is more free and America is more secure.

We still face thugs and terrorists in Iraq who would rather go on killing the innocent than accept the advance of liberty. They know that a free Iraq will be a major defeat for the cause of terror. This collection of killers is trying to shake the will of America. America will never be intimidated by thugs and assassins.

We're aggressively striking the terrorists in Iraq, defeating them there so we don't have to face them in our own country. We're calling on other nations to help Iraq build a free society, which makes all of us more safe. We're standing with the Iraqi people as they assume more of their own defense and move toward self-government. These aren't easy tasks, but they are essential tasks. We will finish what we have begun, and we will win this essential victory in the war on terror.

On national security, Americans have the clearest possible choice. Opponents say they approve of bold action in the world, but only if no other government disagrees. I'm all for united action, and so are the 34 coalition partners we have in Iraq right now. Yet America must never outsource America's national security decision to leaders of other governments.

Some of our opponents are skeptical that the war on terror is really a war at all. They view terrorism more as a crime, a problem to be solved with law enforcement and indictments. Our Nation followed that approach after the World Trade Center was bombed in 1993. The matter was handled in the courts and thought by some to be settled. Terrorists were still training in Afghanistan, still plotting in other nations, and drawing up more ambitious plans. After the

chaos and carnage of September the 11th, it is not enough to serve our enemies with legal papers. With those attacks, the terrorists and supporters declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got.

At bases across our country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with the men and women of our military who are defending this country, who are sacrificing for our security. I've seen their great decency, their unselfish courage. And I can assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in good hands.

Our Nation is prosperous and we are strong, yet we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. We're strong because of the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We're strong because of the institutions that help to give us direction and purpose, families and schools and religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for fair treatment of faith-based groups so they can receive Federal support for their works of compassion and healing. We will not stand for Government discrimination against people of faith. We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We will not stand for any attempt to weaken those reforms and to send people back into the lives of dependence.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every person matters. We will not stand for the treatment of any life as a commodity to be experimented upon or exploited or cloned. We stand for the confirmation of judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law. We will not stand for judges who undermine democracy by legislating from the bench or try to remake the culture of America by court order.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. We're changing the culture in this country from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and, "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you are fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in this new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of the Nation when little is expected of our leaders. This is not one of those times. You and I are living in a period when the stakes are high, the challenges are difficult, the choices are clear, a time where resolve is needed. None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began.

On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. I remember a lot about that day. Workers in hardhats were shouting, "Whatever it takes." I remember a guy pointing at me and saying, "Don't let me down." As we did all—as we all did that day, the men and women who were searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a great responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of America, whatever it takes.

In these times, I've also been a witness to the character of this Nation. Not long ago, some had their doubts about the American character, a capacity to meet serious challenges, capacity to serve a cause greater than self-interest. Americans have given their answer. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. We all have seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most.

We will need all of these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win. And the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every part of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:35 p.m. at the Galt House Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to NASCAR drivers Darrell and Michael Waltrip; Cathy Bailey, national committeewoman, Mike Duncan, national committeeman, and Ellen Williams, chairperson, Republican Party of Kentucky; Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, husband of Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao; Robert W. "Woody" Northup, husband of Representative Anne M. Northup; Gov. Ernie Fletcher and Lt. Gov. Steve Pence of Kentucky; Kentucky Secretary of State Trey Grayson; David Williams, president, and Richard L. Roeding, president pro tem, Kentucky State Senate; and Mercer Reynolds, national finance chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Legislation To Protect Unborn Victims of Violence

February 26, 2004

I applaud the House for passing the “Unborn Victims of Violence Act” today by a strong bipartisan vote. We must continue to build a culture of life in our country, a compassionate society in which every child is born into a loving family and protected by law.

Pregnant women who have been harmed by violence, and their families, know that

there are two victims—the mother and the unborn child—and both victims should be protected by Federal law.

I urge the Senate to pass this bill so that I can sign it into law.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 1997.

Message to the Congress on Continuation and Expansion of the National Emergency With Respect to Cuba

February 26, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 1 of title I of Public Law 65–24, ch. 30, 50 U.S.C. 191, and sections 201 and 301 of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*, I hereby report that I have exercised my statutory authority to continue the national emergency declared in Proclamation 6867 of March 1, 1996, in response to the Cuban government’s destruction of two unarmed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba. Additionally, I have exercised my authority to expand the scope of the national emergency as, over the last year, the Cuban government, which is a designated state-sponsor of terrorism, has taken a series of steps to destabilize relations with the United States, including threatening to abrogate the Migration Accords with the United States and to close the U.S. Interests Section. This conduct has caused a sudden and worsening disturbance of U.S. international relations.

In my proclamation (copy attached), I have authorized and directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to make and issue

such rules and regulations that the Secretary may find appropriate to prevent unauthorized U.S. vessels from entering Cuban territorial waters.

I have authorized these rules and regulations as a result of the Cuban government’s demonstrated willingness to use reckless force, including deadly force, in the ostensible enforcement of its sovereignty. I have also authorized these rules and regulations in an effort to deny resources to the repressive Cuban government that may be used by that government to support terrorist activities and carry out excessive use of force against innocent victims, including U.S. citizens and other persons residing in the United States, and threaten a disturbance of international relations. Accordingly, I have continued and expanded the national emergency in response to these threats.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
February 26, 2004.

NOTE: The proclamation and the notice on continuation are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.